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ABSTRACT

This study determines the current status of student government in the District of Columbia public secondary schools and elicits students' opinions relative to meaningful student involvement in decision-making. This report reflects the responses of student council members and officers, Student Advisory Council participants, staff participants, and a sub-sample of the student body. Findings suggest that: (1) little difference exists between survey responses of senior and junior high school participants; (2) lack of effective communication between student councils, their constituency, and staff has lead to little understanding regarding meaningful student involvement in decision-making, and to widespread dissatisfaction with present student councils; (3) areas identified as important by senior and junior high school participants contain substantial overlap; and (4) both students and staff have positive feelings about student participation in decision-making. (Author/LAA)

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STUDENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

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Departments of Research and Evaluation

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

March 1973

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STUDENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

MARCH, 1973

DEPARTMENTS OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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STUDENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

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Deep appreciations is expressed to members of the Student Advisory Council to the Board of Education for the meaningful assistance they gave to the Departments of Research and Evaluation in the development of the questionnaire that was used in the Student Involvement Survey. Those students who assisted are:

Ada Cooper, Co-Chairman SAC, Dunbar Senior High School
Earl McKnight, Co-Chairman SAC, Kelley-Miller Junior High School
Sylvia Jones, SAC, Cardozo Senior High School
Raymond Parker, SAC, McKinley Senior High School

To another student, Merryl Bland, Wilson Senior High School, goes our thanks for a beautiful and expressive cover design.

And, as always, we are deeply grateful to the principals, assistant principals, student council advisors, and teachers of participating classes for their exceptional cooperation, efforts, and interest which made it possible for us to conduct the Student Involvement Survey in the following schools:

Junior High Schools	Senior High Schools
Lincoln	Cardozo
Terrell	Western
Gordon	Wilson
Rabaut	Roosevelt
Langley	McKinley
Eliot	Eastern
Evans	Woodson
Douglass	Ballou

Vocational High School - Chamberlain

Pilot Survey - Francis Junior High School

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

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SUMMARY OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

Title: Student Involvement Survey

Date: March 1973

Background and Rationale:

In February 1973 Dr. Hugh J. Scott, Superintendent of the Public Schools of the District of Columbia, identified ten priority tasks for completion during the remainder of the 1972-73 school year. One of the outlined goals was the development of an effective student involvement structure in every public secondary school in the District. A Student Involvement Committee headed by the Deputy Superintendent for Educational Programs and Services was formed to develop guidelines for student involvement. The Departments of Research and Evaluation were requested to develop and conduct a research study to determine the current status of student government in the District of Columbia public secondary schools and to elicit students' opinions and attitudes relative to meaningful student involvement in decision-making.

Student Involvement Survey Procedures:

Staff members of the Departments of Research and Evaluation developed, in conjunction with students from the Student Advisory Council to the Board of Education, a Student Involvement Survey questionnaire. This process involved reviewing student involvement literature, discussing the issue with public secondary school principals and student members of city-wide student committees, conducting a pilot survey in a junior high school, and making successive revisions in the questionnaire prior to city-wide implementation of the Student Involvement Survey. A Survey Team from the Departments of Research and Evaluation administered the questionnaire to students in 17 secondary schools randomly selected to represent each ward of the District of Columbia and the vocational education program. In each sample school one class of students on each grade level was asked to complete the survey form. The teacher of the selected class, the sample school principal and assistant principals, and the sample school student council advisor were invited to complete the same survey form. Data was hand-tallied, statistics computed, and data analyzed by staff members of the Departments of Research and Evaluation. The study consisted of the following:

Sample Schools

Ward	Junior High Schools	Senior High Schools	Vocational High School
I	Lincoln	Cardozo	
II	Terrell	(Western)	
III	Gordon	Wilson	
IV	Rabaut	Roosevelt	
V	Langley	McKinley	
VI	Eliot	Eastern	Chamberlain
VII	Evans	Woodson	
VIII	Douglass	Ballou	

Survey Participants

	Junior High Schools	Senior High Schools	Total
Student Body	538	460	998
Student Council Members	40	30	70
Student Council Officers	23	42	65
Student Advisory Council	16	11	27
Student Total	617	543	1,160
Principals, Teachers and Student Council Advisors	36	31	67

The findings of this report are based on the responses of all the student council members and officer participants, all the Student Advisory Council participants, all the staff participants, and a subsample of the student body participants. The subsample consisted of 269 junior high school student body respondents and 230 senior high school student body respondents.

Findings:

1. All sample senior high schools and six of the eight sample junior high schools have student council organizations.
2. An overwhelming percentage of the senior and junior high school students think that it is important to have a student council.
3. In both the senior high schools and the junior high schools, student councils generally consist of homeroom representatives elected by their peers and officers elected by the entire student body.
4. Senior high school student councils for the most part meet weekly while junior high school student councils tend to meet less frequently.
5. Sponsoring social and recreational activities is currently the most common activity of both senior and junior high school student councils, according to responding students.
6. About half the senior and junior high school student respondents indicated that they have little knowledge about the organization, structure, and activities of their student councils.
7. About three-fourths of the senior high and junior high school respondents think that their information about their student council is inadequate.
8. About half the senior high and junior high school student and staff respondents reported that they are dissatisfied with their student councils.
9. Although half of the students have little information about their councils, a majority of the senior high and junior high school students and staff think their student councils deal with important issues.
10. More than half of the senior high school student council officers and members and of the junior high school council officers thought adults in the educational community did not take seriously their student council decisions.
11. Staff respondents of the senior high and junior high sample schools (almost two-thirds) thought adults in the school community took seriously student council decisions.
12. About half the senior and junior high school student respondents think students at their schools are involved in decision-making affecting students.
13. About half of the senior high and junior high school student respondents and about two-thirds of the senior high and junior high school staff respondents think adults in the educational community want student involvement in decisions affecting students.

14. The areas identified as important for student involvement in decision-making were similar for senior high school students and junior high school students. The following lists rank the areas in order of frequency of mention by students:

Senior High School	Junior High School
a. Student rights	a. Student rights
b. School safety and security	b. Dress code
c. Dress code	c. School safety and security
d. Teaching methods	d. Student responsibilities
e. Student responsibilities	e. Class scheduling
f. Subjects offered	f. Teaching methods
g. Class scheduling	g. Subjects offered

15. The areas identified as important for student involvement in decision-making were similar for staff respondents in both senior high and junior high schools. The following lists rank the areas in order of frequency of mention by staff:

Senior High School	Junior High School
a. Student responsibilities	a. Student responsibilities
b. Student rights	b. Student rights
c. School safety and security	c. Student discipline
d. Student discipline	d. School safety and security
e. Teaching methods	e. Extracurricular activities
f. Subjects offered	f. Dress code
g. Extra-curricular activities	g. Subjects offered

16. There is a significant correlation between the rankings assigned to areas for student involvement in decision-making by senior high school students and staff survey participants. Likewise, there is a significant correlation between the rankings assigned to areas for student involvement in decision-making by junior high school students and staff survey participants.

17. Fewer than half of the senior high and junior high school student respondents actually stated problems that they thought kept them from having a say in decisions affecting students at their schools. Of those problems cited by students, the most frequently mentioned were:

Senior High School	Junior High School
a. Teacher apathy and attitude	a. Teacher apathy and attitude
b. Student apathy and immaturity	b. Principal apathy and attitude
c. Principal apathy and attitude	c. Student apathy and immaturity

18. Almost half of the staff respondents in the senior high schools and two thirds of the staff participants in the junior high schools cited no problems that they thought kept students from having a say in decisions affecting students at their schools. Of those problems stated by staff, the most frequently cited were:

Senior High School	Junior High School
a. Ineffective student council	a. Student apathy and immaturity
b. Student apathy and immaturity	b. Teacher apathy and attitude
c. Lack of communication/cooperation between students and faculty/ administration	

19. Fewer than 7 percent of all the student participants indicated they did not care about student government and student involvement. No staff participants indicated they did not care.

Conclusions:

1. There is very little difference between the survey responses of the senior high school participants and the junior high school participants.

   The organizational structures and procedures of senior high school student councils and junior high school student councils are very similar. Similar too, are the opinions of the senior and junior high school students about student government and student involvement in decision-making. Senior high school staff respondents and junior high school staff respondents expressed remarkably similar opinions about student government and student involvement.

2. Effective communication between student councils and their constituency, the student body, is lacking.

   Student councils are, on the whole, most visible to those persons who participate in them, i.e. council members and officers. The general lack of information about council organization and activities among both senior and junior high school student bodies coupled with the widespread interest expressed by the students in their council's activities, suggests that improved procedures for input and feedback need to be developed between the councils and the general student body.

3. Insufficient communication has lead to a lack of understanding between students and staff regarding meaningful student involvement in decision-making.

The adults surveyed indicated greater support for student government and student involvement in decision-making than the students recognized. Staff members reported that they took student council decisions seriously and that they wanted student input in decisions affecting students. Students, on the other hand, were inclined to think the staff did not take council decisions seriously and only half thought the adults in the educational community wanted their input in decision-making. In relation to the identification of decision-making areas in which students should become involved, the distance between adults and students may not be as great as is often perceived. The adults were basically in agreement with the students in naming areas of importance. These findings emphasize the need for more opportunities for adults in the educational community to exchange opinions with the students they serve.

4. There is substantial overlap of the areas identified as important for student involvement in decision-making by the senior high school students and staff and by the junior high school students and staff.

Senior high school students, and to a slightly lesser extent, junior high school students indicated an interest in seeing student involvement in all areas of school life. Senior high staff, and, to a lesser extent, junior high school staff thought students should be involved in most of the areas affecting student life. Student rights, school safety and security, and student responsibilities are identified by both students and staff as areas of greatest importance for student involvement in decision-making. Dress code is of great concern to the students but not to the staff, while student discipline is of great concern to the staff but not to the students. Most of the activities which have not traditionally involved students such as teacher and principal selection, superintendent and Board of Education activities, and even staff evaluation, is of much less immediate importance to both students and staff in terms of student involvement.

5. Although students and staff think that student councils are important and that their councils deal with important issues, there is widespread dissatisfaction with present student councils.

   The survey results suggest that councils are attending primarily to the traditional council activities of sponsoring school social and recreational activities without involving themselves in areas in which students think they should have a voice, such as student rights and school safety and security. The disparity between the existing council activities and the specific areas of student concern may account for the dissatisfaction.

6. The findings of the Student Involvement Survey affirm that students and staff in the secondary schools are deeply interested in having students participate in decision-making in areas affecting students.

   Survey participants expressed a great desire for student involvement in almost all areas affecting student life. Large percentages of participants cited obstacles to student involvement in decision-making. Yet only about half the survey participants thought students at their schools were involved in decision-making. And apathy--either on the part of students, teachers, or administrators--was the most frequently perceived problem hindering student involvement. However, the survey results reveal that a potential reservoir of concerned persons exists and that only effective mechanisms for involvement are lacking.

I. INTRODUCTION

At the monthly community meeting of the Board of Education held at Langley Junior High School on February 7, 1973, Dr. Hugh J. Scott, Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools presented to the Board of Education a planning document entitled "Superintendent's Identification of Tasks, Resource Needs and Prerequisite Actions Associated With the Ten Priority Goals of the Board of Education." One of the ten listed priority goals to be accomplished by the close of the 1972-73 school year is concerned with student involvement in decision-making as it relates to educational programs and students. The stated goal is "to develop and implement in every secondary school an effective student involvement structure." To this end, the Departments of Research and Evaluation were assigned the responsibility for surveying local schools to determine the current status of student government and to elicit students' opinions and attitudes as to what constitutes meaningful student involvement. The Departments of Research and Evaluation were requested to work cooperatively with the Office of Educational Programs and the Student Advisory Committee to the Board of Education in this effort.

Purpose of the Survey

The purpose of this survey is to determine the current status of student government in the secondary schools of the District of Columbia and to find out what students think constitutes meaningful student involvement in decision-making activities affecting students.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the process of constructing a questionnaire, staff members of the Departments of Research and Evaluation reviewed the literature to obtain information about student government structure and suggested areas for student involvement in decisions relating to the educational process and other aspects of student life. The Student Council Handbook provided the most specific suggestions regarding organizational structure, administration, and activities of student government.[1/]

Student involvement is a frequent topic in the literature. The Montgomery County Board of Education has stated as a part of its policies that student involvement is an essential factor in the creation of a stimulating learning climate, it has established guidelines for student participation in planning and evaluating curriculum goals, freedom of expression and inquiry, student assistance in planning assembly programs, extra-curricular activities, school publications, dress codes, appeal and grievance procedures, and discipline.[2/] In a review and analysis of literature by Ronald Armstrong, the educational and legal ramifications of student involvement are discussed. It was pointed out that the proper role of students and administrators in each area would vary, but the extent to which students became involved depends upon the administration--school board, superintendent, and principals. Presently, student governments in some school systems are under-represented in the policy and decision-making activities of the school and often the student government themselves are not representative of their student body due to qualifications imposed by the faculty.[3/]

Some educators view communications as a key to effective student participation. A student task force in North Carolina developed specific recommendations to both administrators and

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1/ National Association of Student Councils. The Student Council Handbook. Washington, D.C.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1967.

2/ "Student Involvement in the Educational Process". Rockville, Md.: Montgomery County Board of Education, revised August 1972.

3/ Armstrong, Ronald. "Student Involvement: Analysis and Bibliography". Eugene, Oregon: Oregon University, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, February 1972. ED 060 510

students regarding their attitudes and actions to facilitate productive relationships.[4/] Student advisory councils, student membership on ad hoc committees, and student representatives on school boards were frequently suggested as a means through which protest and dissent could be constructively channeled for positive action.

4/ Student Involvement: A Bridge to Total Education. Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina State Board of Education, January 1971. ED 055 313

III. PROCEDURES

The flow chart in Figure 1 details the steps taken by the Departments of Research and Evaluation in the process of developing, conducting, and reporting on the Student Involvement Survey. In summary, after reading the literature on student involvement and consulting school administrators and students on the local issues of student involvement, staff members of the Departments of Research and Evaluation developed a survey questionnaire that asked about the status of student government, and elicited opinions concerning student involvement on various issues.

Feeling that a student questionnaire should be reviewed by students before being issued, the Departments of Research and Evaluation presented its plans for the student involvement survey to the Student Advisory Council to the Board of Education and asked for volunteers to review the survey instrument. Several volunteers met with staff members in a work session and the instrument was revised in accord with students' suggestions. Following this revision, the Departments of Research and Evaluation wished to validate the instrument through a pilot survey. Therefore, representative classes of the 7th, 8th and 9th grades of one junior high school participated in responding to the questionnaire administered by staff members of the Department. On the basis of reactions, questions and responses, the instrument was further revised. The finalized questionnaire was then sent by the Assistant Superintendent for Research and Evaluation to the Deputy Superintendent of the Office of Educational Programs and Services for review. She distributed the instrument to the Operating Assistant Superintendents for comments. Upon receiving the Deputy Superintendent's approval of the instrument and authorization to proceed with the study, plans were developed for carrying out the study. Schedules were arranged with the principals of participating schools. A survey team comprised of staff members of the Departments of Research and Evaluation visited the schools and administered questionnaires to students in the classrooms selected for the sample.

Principals, student council faculty advisors and teachers in the schools visited were also invited to respond to this same questionnaire on student involvement. The responses have been tallied and analyzed by the staff members of the Departments of Research and Evaluation. The results are presented in this document.

Population and Sample

The population from which the sample of students and adult educators has been drawn included Washington, D. C. public junior and senior high school students, their teachers and principals. Of a total of 47 secondary schools in the District of Columbia 30 are junior high schools, 12 are senior high schools and 5 are vocational high schools. The secondary school student population totals

55,482 distributed as follows:

	October 19, 1972
Grades 7 - 9	31,487
Grades 10-12	21,114 a/
Vocational	2,851
Total Secondary	55,482

a/ Includes Spingarn STAY and School Without Walls

Tne professional and supporting staff in the secondary schools totals 2,866.

The Departments of Research and Evaluation considered a number of possible sampling designs. Importance was placed on ensuring city-wide representation in the sample and on guaranteeing input from the spectrum of concerned persons in the schools, from student body to administrator. At the same time it was necessary to minimize the time needed for administering the questionnaire. Therefore, it was decided that the Student Involvement Survey would be administered in one senior high and one junior high from each election ward in the city. In each school students from each grade level, their teachers, student council officers, their advisor, and administrators would be asked to complete the survey form.

The sample schools were selected using a random table of numbers with a list of junior high schools and senior high schools stratified by ward. In Wards 1, 7, and 8, the single high school became a sample school. In Ward 2 where there is no senior high school, a random selection was made between the two high schools which receive students from the junior highs in that ward. The vocational school which has both men and women in attendance was arbitrarily selected to represent the vocational schools in the senior high sample. The 17 schools which participated in the Student Involvement Survey were the following:

Ward	Junior High	Senior High	Vocational High
I	Lincoln	Cardozo	
II	Terrell	(Western)	
III	Gordon	Wilson	
IV	Rabaut	Roosevelt	
V	Langley	McKinley	
VI	Eliot	Eastern	Chamberlain
VII	Evans	Woodson	
VIII	Douglass	Ballou	

The student body sample was drawn from one class on each grade level in the sample schools. These classes were arranged for by the principal of the school. In the case of senior high schools where all the students in a given class were not from the same grade, the principal chose a class with a predominance of one grade level. The Survey Team stipulated that the selected classes should be among the middle range in achievement and involvement in the school.

At each sample school, the survey was administered to members of the Student Council Executive Committee to ensure input from presumably knowledgeable and involved students. Also, the principal, assistant principals, the Student Council faculty advisor, and the teachers in the classrooms which participate in the survey were invited to complete the questionnaire. Prior to the administration of the survey in the sample schools members of the Student Advisory Council completed the questionnaire during one of their regular meetings at the Presidential Building.

A total of 1,160 students and 67 adults responded to the questionnaire. The survey participants are distributed as follows:

	Junior High	Senior High	Total
Student Body	538	460	998
Student Council Members	40	30	70
Student Council Officers	23	42	65
Student Advisory Council	16	11	27
Student Total	617	543	1,160
Principals, Teachers, and Council Advisors	36	31	67
Number of Schools in the Sample	8	9	17

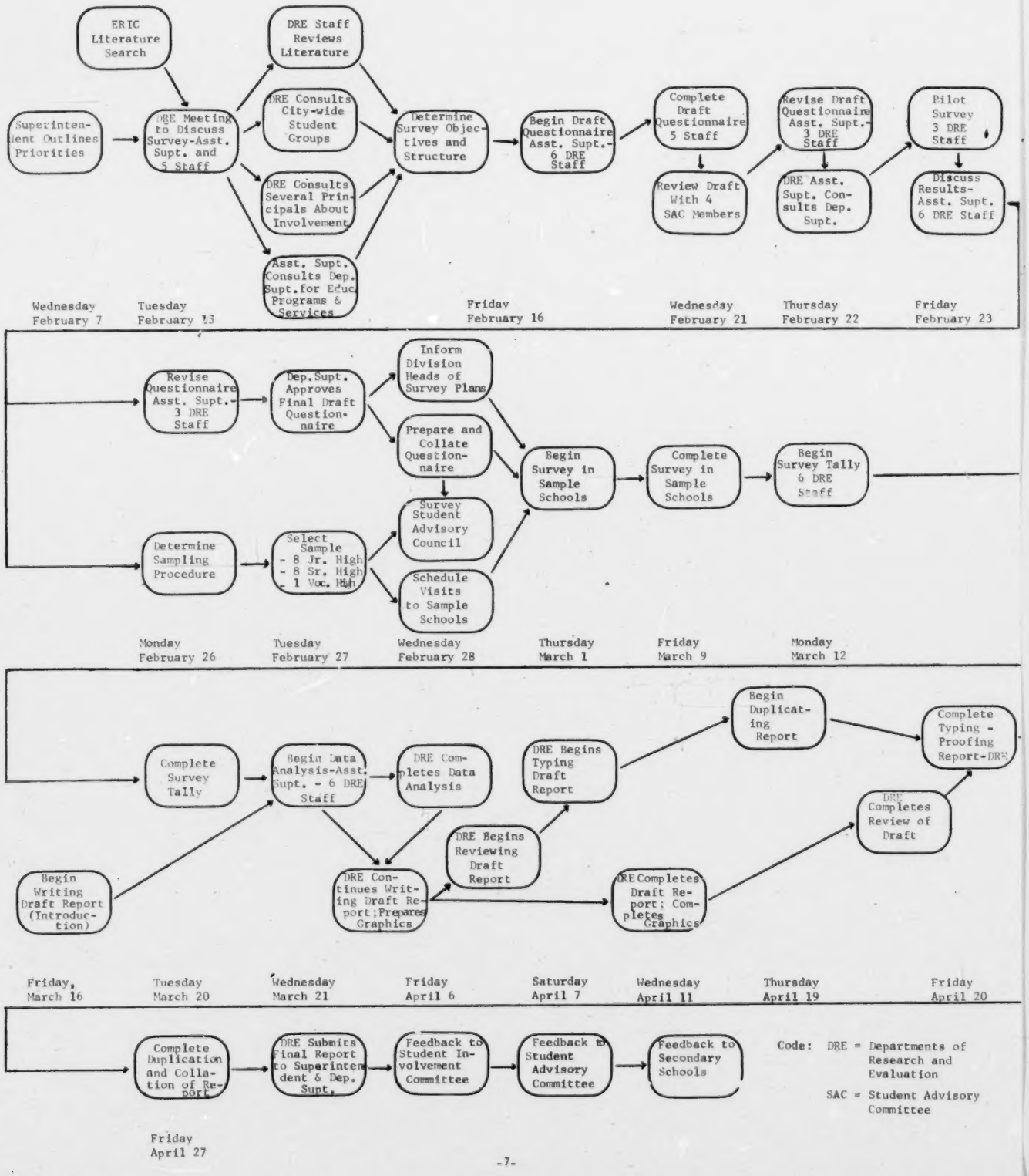
Instrumentation

One survey instrument, the Student Involvement Survey (see Appendix I), was used in this study of student involvement in decision-making that affects students. The instrument was designed by the Departments of Research and Evaluation with the cooperation of several students who are members of the Board of Education's Student Advisory Council.

In the process of preparing the survey instrument, staff members of the Departments of Research and Evaluation read literature on student involvement, consulted high school principals, talked with students who are members of the Student Advisory Council to the Board of Education, defined the purposes of the questionnaire within the scope of the Superintendent's priorities, and developed questions for a draft questionnaire. The Student Advisory Council co-chairpersons and two other senior high Council representatives met with the survey team and offered perceptive criticism and suggestions that resulted in a revision of the survey form. The revised instrument was piloted in a junior high school that was not in the randomly selected survey sample. Revised once again, the final draft was approved by the Deputy Superintendent for Instruction and copies were reproduced and prepared for city-wide administration. (See Figure 1 for further detail.)

FIGURE 1

STEPS IN DEVELOPING, CONDUCTING, AND REPORTING STUDENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY


ERIC Literature Search
DRE Staff Reviews Literature
Superintendent Outlines Priorities
DRE Meeting to Discuss Survey-Asst. Supt. and 5 Staff
DRE Consults City-wide Student Groups
DRE Consults Several Principals About Involvement
Asst. Supt. Consults Dep. Supt. for Educ. Programs & Services
Determine Survey Objectives and Structure
Begin Draft Questionnaire Asst. Supt.-6 DRE Staff
Complete Draft Questionnaire 5 Staff
Review Draft With 4 SAC Members
Revise Draft Questionnaire Asst. Supt.-3 DRE Staff
DRE Asst. Supt. Consults Dep. Supt.
Pilot Survey 3 DRE Staff
Discuss Results-Asst. Supt. 6 DRE Staff
Wednesday February 7
Tuesday February 13
Friday February 16
Wednesday February 21
Thursday February 22
Friday February 23
Revise Questionnaire Asst. Supt.-3 DRE Staff
Dep. Supt. Approves Final Draft Questionnaire
Inform Division Heads of Survey Plans
Prepare and Collate Questionnaire
Survey Student Advisory Council
Schedule Visits to Sample Schools
Determine Sampling Procedure
Select Sample - 8 Jr. High - 8 Sr. High - 1 Voc. High
Begin Survey in Sample Schools
Complete Survey in Sample Schools
Begin Survey Tally 6 DRE Staff
Monday February 26
Tuesday February 27
Wednesday February 28
Thursday March 1
Friday March 9
Monday March 12
Complete Survey Tally
Begin Data Analysis-Asst. Supt. - 6 DRE Staff
DRE Completes Data Analysis
DRE Begins Typing Draft Report
Begin Duplicating Report
Complete Typing - Proofing Report-DRE
DRE Completes Review of Draft
Begin Writing Draft Report (Introduction)
DRE Continues Writing Draft Report; Prepares Graphics
DRE Begins Reviewing Draft Report
DRE Completes Draft Report; Completes Graphics
Friday, March 16
Tuesday March 20
Wednesday March 21
Friday April 6
Saturday April 7
Wednesday April 11
Thursday April 19
Friday April 20
Complete Duplication and Collation of Report
DRE Submits Final Report to Superintendent & Dep. Supt.
Feedback to Student Involvement Committee
Feedback to Student Advisory Committee
Feedback to Secondary Schools
Friday April 27
Code: DRE = Departments of Research and Evaluation
SAC = Student Advisory Committee

The Student Involvement Survey instrument contains two parts. In Part I the questions concern the structure and the status of the student government. Twenty specific questions refer to meeting arrangements, election procedures, and feedback methods. Respondents could choose to answer "Yes", "No", or "Don't Know" to the questions by checking the appropriate column. The final question in Part I was open-ended: "What does your student council do?" Part II focused on opinions about student government and what the respondents thought constituted meaningful student involvement. Responses to 23 specific questions could range from "Definitely Yes" to "Definitely No" with an additional possibility of "Don't Care." In order to identify those issues that students felt were most important for them to be involved in, the questionnaire asked respondents to list the three issues that are of greatest importance to them from a given list of issues. The last question in Part II was open-ended and asked the respondent to list problems connected with student involvement in decision-making at their school.

Data Collection

The Student Involvement Survey instrument was used to collect all survey data in this study. A Field Survey Team was composed of three staff members of the Departments of Research and Evaluation. The Team scheduled a visit to each of the 17 sample schools. Ideally, the Team visited two schools in a morning and one in the afternoon. At each sample school each member of the Field Survey Team administered the Student Involvement Survey in one of the three sample classrooms selected at that school. To ensure that all students could participate in the survey and register their opinions, the survey instrument was read aloud in some classrooms where necessary. Members of the Executive Committee were generally assembled by the principals in one of the selected survey classrooms where they completed the questionnaire along with the other students. In each classroom the Field Survey Team members explained the purpose of the Student Involvement Survey and encouraged students to respond independently and express their opinions freely and openly on the survey form. No identification of individuals was made on the forms. Teachers in the participating classrooms were invited to register their opinions on the same Student Involvement Survey instrument while their students were responding. All forms were collected by the Field Survey Team member when he left the classroom.

Principals, assistant principals, and the faculty advisor to the Student Council were asked to complete the Survey instrument while the Field Survey Team was in the building. Due to understandable constraints on the administrator's time, however, envelopes were left with the instruments so that the forms could be returned to the Departments of Research and Evaluation via the school mail upon completion.

Data Processing

This report is based on the responses of all the student council members and officers, all the Student Advisory Council respondents,

all the returns from the school staff and administration, and on half the student body sample's responses. The limited number of personnel in the Departments of Research and Evaluation and time constraints made it necessary to tally and analyze only a subsample of the total student body responses for this report. To ensure that the subsample would still contain input from each of the sample schools and from each grade level within the schools, the survey team selected every other questionnaire from the completed forms of each sample classroom.

Staff members in the Departments of Research and Evaluation tallied the student responses by school, by grade, and by group--student body, and student council members, and student council officers. Student Advisory Council responses were tallied separately by grade. Staff and administration questionnaires were not identified by school or position and were tallied as a group. The data was analyzed by junior high and senior high responses across the several groups of persons responding to the questionnaire.

Delimitations

Because of the limited time for developing and conducting the survey, analyzing the results and preparing a report, the survey attempts to elicit a generalized picture of the status of student government in secondary schools within the city. No attempt is made to delineate school-by-school for all 47 secondary schools the exact structure of the student council. The survey focuses on what structures and processes are being employed in student government and on the attitudes and opinions of the students toward these structures and processes. No attempt is made to describe the effectiveness of these student council structures and processes in any given situation or even generally. Inferences about the success or lack of success with which students are involved in the decision-making process can be made only with reference to the students' stated degree of satisfaction with their current student council set-up. Readers should bear in mind that the responses to Part I of the questionnaire reflect not the actual situation, but the respondents' perception of the situation that exists in their schools.

IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

For the purposes of analysis the survey participants have been grouped into two major categories: senior high respondents and junior high respondents. Within each category, there are four sub-groupings that will appear in the tables of this report.

1. Student body: students surveyed in the sample schools who indicated they were neither student council members nor student council officers.

2. Student council members: students surveyed in the sample schools who indicated they were representatives to the student council in their school.

3. Student council officers and Student Advisory Council members: members of the student council executive committee surveyed in the sample schools, and student council officers or other students who represent their school on the city-wide Student Advisory Council to the Board of Education.

4. Staff: principals and assistant principals of the sample schools, teachers of the selected classes in the sample schools, and student council advisors in the sample schools who completed the survey form.

*** Senior High School Results: Students and Staff ***

Status of Student Councils in Senior High Schools

All nine of the senior high schools included in the survey sample have operating student councils. Table 1 on the next page lists various characteristics of student councils abbreviated from the questions in Part I of the Student Involvement Survey. (See Appendix I) The table shows what percent of each sub-group indicated that the given characteristic was common to their school ("Yes" column), what percent indicated the characteristic was not common to their school ("No" column), and what percent either did not know or did not respond to the question ("D.K./ N.R." column).

The Student Involvement Survey elicited responses about: procedures for selecting student council members and officers, methods of representation, meeting practices, and procedures for input from and feedback to the student body regarding council activities. A general picture of student council practices in the senior high schools of the District of Columbia

TABLE 1

STATUS OF STUDENT COUNCILS
IN A SAMPLE OF D.C. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
MARCH, 1973

Student Council Characteristics	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS											
	Student Body N=230			Student Council Members N=30			Student Advisory and Council Officers N=50			Staff: Principals, Teachers, Council Advisors N=31		
	Yes	No	D.K. N.R.	Yes	No	D.K. N.R.	Yes	No	D.K. N.R.	Yes	No	D.K. N.R.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Meeting Procedures:												
Fixed Meeting Schedule	49	7	44	70	16	14	60	34	6	61	10	29
Special Meetings Called If Needed	39	7	54	70	14	16	84	12	4	58	3	39
Council Meets Once A Week	39	16	45	70	27	3	74	22	4	52	9	39
Council Meets Before/After School	52	4	44	87	10	3	74	22	4	65	19	16
Roberts' Rules of Order Used	10	4	86	47	13	40	36	46	18	32	13	55
Non-Member Students Can Attend Meetings	41	8	51	73	11	16	78	10	12	61	4	35
Teachers Attend Council Meetings	22	9	69	20	40	40	18	76	6	29	29	42
Representation:												
Each Homeroom Represented in Council	70	10	20	83	17	--	74	20	6	77	7	16
Grade Average Qualification For Members	20	36	44	13	77	10	40	54	6	19	55	26
Selection Procedures:												
All Students Vote For Council Members	76	9	15	80	14	6	86	12	2	84	--	16
School Faculty/Administrators Choose Members	10	66	24	13	84	3	18	82	--	--	88	12
All Students Vote For Council Officers	54	16	30	70	24	6	82	14	4	68	19	13
Only Council Members Vote For Council Officers	11	51	38	23	70	7	20	72	8	19	65	16
School Faculty/Administrators Choose Officers	6	57	37	3	80	17	--	98	2	3	91	6
Input and Feedback Procedures:												
Prior knowledge of Council Agenda	9	74	17	20	73	7	68	30	2	23	51	26
Can Make Suggestions For Agenda	47	18	35	77	3	20	94	2	4	61	13	26
Meeting Procedures Are Reported	55	37	8	63	30	7	90	6	4	52	25	23

D.K. = Don't Know
N.R. = No Response

emerges from an analysis of the responses. It is important to keep in mind that the results reported here reflect the respondents' perceptions of what exists and not necessarily the actual situation.

The compilation of responses indicates that usually each homeroom is represented on the student council and that all students vote for council members. Council officers, too, are generally elected by all the students and not by the student council alone. Meetings are scheduled weekly; special meetings are called when necessary. Council meetings are most likely to be scheduled either before or after school instead of during the regular school hours. Roberts' Rules of Order are very likely to be in use at some of the senior high schools in the sample. However, because such a large percentage of each subgroup indicated they did not know whether their council used Robert's Rules, the data is inconclusive about the extent to which these procedures are being employed. Council meetings are generally open to all students and teachers. In very few instances, however, was it reported that teachers other than the council adviser actually attended the meetings. Almost half or more of the student respondents and the teacher respondents reported that they could make suggestions for discussions at council meetings. The student council officers and student council members, however, were more likely to indicate that they could have an input than were members of the student body as a whole. Only the student council officers reported in any large numbers that they had knowledge of the council agenda prior to the council meetings. But more than half of all the groups responding indicated that they did receive reports of the proceedings of the student council meetings.

According to the data displayed in Table 1, a large number of senior high students know very little about the student government procedures at their schools. More than 20 percent of the student body participants checked "Don't Know" or gave no response to most of the questions about their student councils. The student body was most knowledgeable about council member election procedures and about representation practices. They were least knowledgeable about council meeting details, with 44 percent or more indicating "Don't Know" for all related questions. Mechanisms for input from and feedback to the student body do not appear to be well developed. About three-fourths of the students reported that they had no prior knowledge of the council agenda and although just over half said they did receive reports of council proceedings, another 40 percent reported that they did not receive reports of council meetings. Student council officers and council members were more definite about their responses than were the student body members, having a lower "Don't Know/No Response" rate. This supports the methodological

assumption of the study: that the most reliable information on the status of student councils in the schools would come from those students who are most involved.

Activities of Student Councils in Senior High Schools

An open-ended question on the Student Involvement Survey asked: "What does your student council do?" Table 2 on the next page lists the wide variety of activities cited by the survey participants in order of frequency of mention by all student sub-groups combined. It is important to note that 44 percent of all student participants and 42 percent of the staff participants either gave no response to this question or indicated they did not know what their council did. The lowest no response rate came from the student council officers and Student Advisory Council members (15 percent) followed by the student council members (23 percent).

The student council activity mentioned most frequently by the students was: sponsor social and recreational activities such as plays, dances, festivals, and trips. This activity ranked second on the faculty/administrator group list of activities. The activity cited most frequently by the adults was: solicit students' opinions and inform them of their rights and responsibilities. This activity ranked third on the combined student list. In addition to these two activities, the survey responses suggest that planning fund raising activities and planning ways to improve the school are other tasks commonly undertaken by student councils in the senior high schools surveyed.

While the numbers of respondents citing activities other than these four is very low for each activity, it is important to note that 24 other activities were at least mentioned by someone in the sample schools. This suggests that councils do undertake a number of projects in the schools and in the communities in addition to the most common activities relating to planning school functions. The number of no responses, on the other hand, underlines the lack of awareness of the student councils activities among the students and faculty in schools.

Opinions About Student Government

Part II of the Student Involvement Survey asked students and staff to indicate their opinions about student government in their schools. Table 3 on the next page displays the responses of the senior high school survey participants by giving two percentages for each sub-group. The columns labeled "Affirmative" combine the percentages of persons who checked either "Definitely Yes" or "I tend to think so" for a given questionnaire item. The columns labeled "Negative" combine the percentages of persons who checked

TABLE 2

ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY STUDENT COUNCILS
IN A SAMPLE OF D.C. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS,
RANKED ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY

MARCH, 1973

Student Council Activities	PERCENT* OF AND RANKING BY RESPONDENTS						
	Student Body N=230 %	Student Council Members N=30 %	Student Advisory Council Officers N=53 %	Students Cumulative N=313 %	Ranking by Students	Staff: Principals Teachers, & Council Advisors N=31 %	Ranking by Staff
1. Don't know/no response	53	23	15	44	1.5	42	2
2. Sponsor social and recreational activities, i.e. plays, dances, festivals, trips, etc.	33	77	64	44	1.5	29	3
3. Plan school fund raising activities, i.e. bake sales, etc.	20	37	30	23	3	13	7.5
4. Solicit students' opinions; inform them of their rights, responsibilities, etc.	10	40	47	19	4	55	1
5. Plan ways for overall improvement of school, i.e. menu, facilities, beautification, etc.	5	27	21	10	5	23	4
6. Sponsor assembly programs; speakers, awards, etc.	4	20	23	9	6	10	9.5
7. Serve as link between students and administration	4	13	9	6	7	3	16
8. Nothing	4	3	--	3	10.5	--	--
9. Give scholarships; fellowships	.3	--	15	3	10.5	--	--
10. Plan extra-curricular activities	3	3	4	3	10.5	19	5.5
11. Sponsor homecoming activities	1	--	9	3	10.5	13	7.5
12. Promote good student-student, student-faculty relationships	1	7	6	3	10.5	--	--
13. Sell school tickets	1	--	11	3	10.5	--	--
14. Purchase needed school items, i.e. flag, science equipment, etc.	--	7	8	2	14.5	--	--
15. Give to charity; baskets to needy, etc.	1	--	6	2	14.5	19	5.5
16. Promote class activities; classroom governments, etc.	--	7	4	1	16	--	--
17. Sponsor school newspaper	.3	3	2	.9	17.5	3	16
18. Preparing plans for a citywide student government workshop	--	3	4	.9	17.5	--	--
19. Provide orientation to new students; help students with adjustment problems	--	--	4	.6	22	10	9.5
20. Attend meetings downtown	--	7	--	.6	22	6	12
21. Sponsor tutoring programs and give parties for neighborhood children	.3	--	2	.6	22	6	12
22. Conduct voting campaigns; mock elections, etc.	--	--	4	.6	22	6	12
23. Help organize various classes, school calendar, etc.	1	--	--	.6	22	--	--
24. Participate in student exchange programs	--	--	4	.6	22	--	--
25. Assist faculty, i.e. as monitors, ushers, etc.	1	--	--	.6	22	--	--
26. Encourage parent participation; visitations	.3	--	--	.3	27	3	16
27. Plan yearbook	--	3	--	.3	27	3	16
28. Establish honor roll lists	--	--	2	.3	27	--	--
29. Send representatives to the PTSA	--	--	--	--	--	3	16

* Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents.

TABLE 3

OPINIONS ABOUT STUDENT GOVERNMENT
IN A SAMPLE OF D.C. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
MARCH, 1973

Statements About Student Government	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS							
	Student Body N=230		Student Council Members N=30		Student Advisory and Council Officers N=54		Staff: Principals, Teachers, Council Advisors N=31	
	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %
General Opinion:								
Student Council Is Important	87	5	96	--	93	--	100	--
Our Student Council Deals With Important Issues	58	29	76	17	86	14	55	32
I Am Satisfied With Our Student Council	42	44	46	50	50	48	42	45
Receptivity to Council:								
Faculty/Administrators Take Council Decisions Seriously	45	48	33	60	40	58	64	32
I Am Interested In Council Activities	67	19	94	3	96	2	78	6
Other Students Are Interested In Council Activities	60	29	60	30	54	44	55	39
Meeting Procedures: Student Council:								
Meets Frequently Enough	45	39	56	40	56	40	55	39
Should Meet During School Hours	43	44	46	47	64	26	68	29
Should Meet Before/After School	60	18	66	20	55	24	55	32
Should Be Open To All Students	83	10	83	13	75	19	78	23
Should Be Attended By Faculty/ Administrators	73	15	70	23	72	13	64	23
Council Representatives:								
Should Have Grade Average Qualifications	36	57	20	70	41	46	64	36
Should Receive Grades	19	70	17	73	33	59	16	84
Should Receive Course Credit	26	62	33	53	45	50	12	81
Selection Procedures:								
Council Member Selection Method Is Good	71	21	87	10	84	14	78	12
Council Officer Selection Method Is Good	68	22	83	6	88	10	77	12
Input and Feedback Procedures:								
Information On Council Activities Is Adequate	25	70	50	50	56	42	29	64
Students At Our School Are Involved In Decision-making	51	43	43	46	53	40	58	32
Teachers Want Students Involved In Decisions	65	29	53	40	59	33	71	13
Principals Want Students Involved In Decisions	58	38	46	53	56	33	71	9
Superintendent Wants Students Involved In Decisions	56	38	50	46	56	41	74	6
Board of Education Wants Students Involved In Decisions	50	43	47	50	65	34	81	--

NOTE: AFFIRMATIVE AND NEGATIVE RESPONSES DO NOT ADD TO 100% IN EACH CASE DUE TO NO RESPONSES ON SOME FORMS.

"Definitely No" or "I tend to think not."

An overwhelming percentage of each group of respondents thought that having a student council was important. Although the student body as a whole had revealed that they had little knowledge about the mechanics of their student government (see Table 1, "Student Council Procedures"), eighty-seven percent thought that a council was important. A majority of each group of respondents thought that the student council at their school dealt with issues that were important, student council officers being the most likely to affirm the importance of council issues. More than half the respondents indicated that they were interested in council activities and thought others were interested as well. On the other hand, in confirmation of the lack of knowledge about council activities revealed in Table 2, 70 percent of the student body respondents indicated that their information about council activities was inadequate. These findings suggest that improved communications networks regarding the student council and its activities should be instituted in the senior high schools.

The question "Are you satisfied with your student council?" divided each group of respondents about equally, with just under half making an affirmative response, and just under half making a negative response. The question arises: Why were respondents dissatisfied? Survey respondents generally agreed that the selection procedures used in their schools for council members and officers were good. So this could not be the source of discontent. The survey was not designed to isolate the sources of discontent; however, the findings indicate the need for further research on this question.

Respondents generally agreed that council meetings should be open to all students and to the faculty and administrators. There was disagreement about: 1) whether the meetings should be held during school hours or outside school hours; 2) whether council members should receive grades and/or credit for council involvement; and 3) whether council membership should be restricted by grade average qualifications. While about three-fourths of the staff respondents were against course credit or grades for council involvement, about a third of the council members and officers thought they should receive grades and/or credit. On the other hand about two-thirds of the staff respondents favored a grade average qualifications for council members, while student respondents -- especially council members -- tended to be against grade average restrictions.

An interesting contrast occurred in the responses to the question: "Do you think that student council decisions are taken seriously by your teachers, principal, and other staff members?"

Almost two-thirds of the faculty/administrator respondents thought the adults in the school community took student council decisions seriously. However, fewer than one-half of each student respondent group -- only one-third of the council members -- thought the adults took their council decisions seriously. A similar dichotomy was apparent in the responses to questions about whether respondents thought teachers, principals, the superintendent and the Board of Education wanted students to be involved in decisions affecting students. More than two-thirds of the faculty/administrator respondents and about half the student respondents thought teachers, principals, superintendent, and the Board wanted student input. However, while staff negative responses were very low, one-third or more of each student respondent group thought the adults did not want them to have a say in matters affecting students. Council members tended to be the most pessimistic about the interest of the adult community in student involvement in decision-making.

As an alternative to making an affirmative or a negative response to the questions in Part II of the Student Involvement Survey, participants could have made no response or checked "Don't Care". The average percent of the survey participants who selected one of these alternatives on each of the questions (See Appendix I, Student Involvement Survey, Part II, questions 1 through 22) are the following:

	Don't Care	No Response
Student Body	7%	3%
Student Council Members	2%	5%
Student Council Officers and Student Advisory Council Members	3%	4%
Faculty/Administrators	--	9%

Opinions About Student Involvement

The Student Involvement Survey listed a number of decision-making areas in which students might want to become involved. The survey participants could indicate one of the following: whether they thought students should definitely be involved, whether they tended to think students should be involved, whether students should definitely not be involved, or whether they tended to think students should not be involved. Table 4 on the next page shows the results with two percentages for each sub-group, combining the affirmative responses into one percentage and the negative responses into another. A high percentage of each sub-group of senior high school respondents favored involvement in all the areas listed on the Survey form. Only one issue received a greater than 90 percent affirmative response from each sub-group: student rights. High

TABLE 4

OPINIONS ABOUT STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
IN DECISION-MAKING FOR AREAS AFFECTING STUDENTS
IN A SAMPLE OF D.C. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
MARCH, 1973

Areas Affecting Students	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS							
	Student Body N=230		Student Council Members N=30		Student Advisory and Council Officers N=54		Staff: Principals, Teachers, Council Advisors N=31	
	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %
a. Textbook selection	69	24	53	30	89	10	65	26
b. Subjects offered	87	6	83	3	96	--	97	3
c. Extra-curricular activities	89	4	90	3	96	2	60	40
d. Student discipline	79	14	70	13	92	8	97	3
e. Student grades	75	19	70	20	78	16	81	19
f. Rating of teachers	74	17	73	14	92	6	78	22
g. Rating of principals	74	17	76	13	91	8	74	26
h. Rating of courses	82	25	73	10	99	--	90	10
i. School safety and security	84	11	90	3	93	4	97	--
j. Dress code	88	6	90	--	93	2	94	6
k. Teaching methods	68	25	67	20	89	2	68	29
l. Design of school buildings	47	37	33	47	53	39	67	29
m. Class scheduling	77	17	80	10	83	11	77	16
n. Student rights	92	3	93	--	96	--	96	--
o. Student responsibilities	88	6	90	3	95	--	96	--
p. Athletic rules	62	27	53	36	78	13	87	9
q. Cheerleader selection	64	22	60	33	70	24	90	10
r. Principal selection	49	41	47	43	57	38	42	58
s. Teacher selection	59	34	50	44	63	32	39	58
t. School board activities	72	18	67	20	81	13	61	32
u. Superintendent's activities	54	31	50	30	65	26	45	48

NOTE: AFFIRMATIVE AND NEGATIVE RESPONSES DO NOT ADD TO 100% IN EACH CASE DUE TO NO RESPONSES ON SOME FORMS.

percentages of all sub-groups favored student involvement in decisions affecting student responsibilities, school safety and security, dress code, and subjects offered. The student groups were more concerned that they have a say about extra-curricular activities than was the faculty/administrator group. On the other hand, a higher percent of the faculty/administrator group than of the student groups favored student involvement in decisions affecting student discipline, the rating of courses and cheerleader selection.

Respondents in all of the groups were least interested in having a say about the design of the school buildings. Although about half of the respondents indicated an interest in having a voice in principal selection, teacher selection, and superintendent's activities, about a third or more of each sub-group was inclined against involvement in these areas.

Survey participants might also have made no response or checked "Don't Care" with regard to the areas for student involvement listed on the Survey form. The average percent of No Response/Don't Care answers for each of the areas listed are as follows:

	Don't Care	No Response
Student Body	3%	5%
Student Council Members	3%	9%
Student Council Officers and Student Advisory Council Members	1%	4%
Faculty/Administrators	--	2%

Areas Cited as Most Important for Student Involvement by Senior High School Respondents

In the Student Involvement Survey, each participant was asked to choose from the given list of 20 areas for possible student involvement (shown in Table 4) the three areas he thought were most important for student involvement. Table 5 on the next page shows the number and percent of the total respondents--students or faculty/administrators--who cited a given item as one of the three most important areas for student involvement. The areas are ranked in order of frequency of mention and are shown in order of the frequency of mention by the combined student respondent groups.

The three areas for student involvement cited most frequently by the student respondents were: student rights, school safety and security, and dress code. The three areas cited most frequently by staff respondents were: student responsibilities, student rights, and school safety and security. The rank order correlation was computed to determine whether there is a significant relationship between students' and staffs' opinions regarding student involvement; (i.e. what students considered important is given relatively the same importance by staff.) The rank order correlation showed that the relationship between the rankings of the students and of the staff was statistically significant at the .01 level of probability.

TABLE 5

AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT
TO STUDENTS IN A SAMPLE OF D. C. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
RANKED ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY BY STUDENT GROUPS AND BY STAFF
MARCH, 1973

Areas for Student Involvement	Students: All Student Groups N = 313			Staff: Principals, Teachers, and Council Advisors N = 31		
	Rank	No. of Responses	% of Respondents*	Rank	No. of Responses	% of Respondents*
Student Rights	1	169	54	2	12	39
School Safety and Security	2	83	27	3	10	32
Dress Code	3	70	22	--	--	--
Teaching Methods	4	66	21	5.5	7	23
Student Responsibilities	5	65	21	1	19	61
Subjects Offered	6	64	20	5.5	7	23
Class Scheduling	7	55	18	8	4	13
Student Grades	8	31	10	11.5	1	3
Extra-curricular Activities	9	30	10	7	5	16
Teacher Selection	10.5	28	9	--	--	--
School Board Activities	10.5	28	9	--	--	--
Rating of Teachers	12	23	7	9	3	10
Textbook Selection	13	17	5	--	--	--
Principal Selection	14	15	5	--	--	--
Student Discipline	15.5	14	4	4	8	26
Athletic Rules	15.5	14	4	--	--	--
Rating of Principals	17.5	8	3	10	2	6
Design of School Buildings	17.5	8	3	--	--	--
Others	19	7	2	--	--	--
Superintendent's Activities	20.5	6	2	--	--	--
Rating of Courses	20.5	6	2	11.5	1	3
Cheerleader Selection	22	5	2	--	--	--

* Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents.

Note: Of the student and staff respondents 9 and 10 percent, respectively, did not list any areas as being important for student involvement.

Although the order in which the survey participants considered an area important for student involvement was not statistically different, the intensity with which the groups held their opinion may be. For example, student responsibilities, ranked first in importance by the teachers and fifth by the students, was cited as important by 61 percent of staff respondents and only 21 percent of the student respondents. Likewise, the area of student discipline, ranked fourth by the staff and 15.5 by the students, was cited as important by 26 percent of the staff and only 4 percent of the students. None of the staff participants cited dress code as an area of importance for student involvement, while 22 percent of the students thought it important.

According to the laws of probability the chance of an item being selected when a respondent has three choices from a list of twenty items is about 15 percent. That 54 percent of the students cited student rights as an area of importance for student involvement is, therefore, extremely significant. This means that more than three times the number of students who could have been expected to select this item by chance thought it important for students to be involved in decisions concerning student rights. Thirty-nine percent of the faculty/administrators also thought this an important area, or more than twice the number that would have been expected to mention this area by chance. Seven items were mentioned as important areas for student involvement by more than 15 percent of the student respondents and seven were cited by more than 15 percent of the faculty/administrators.

It is important to keep in mind in the interpretation of these findings that the areas for student involvement were not defined in the Student Involvement Survey. Each respondent was answering according to his own conceptualization of the issue. Therefore, before drawing conclusions about the coincidence of student opinion with adult opinion, both groups should define what they mean, for example, by student rights and student responsibilities.

Problems Hindering Student Involvement in Senior High Schools

The final question on the Student Involvement Survey was open-ended. Respondents were asked to list problems at their school that kept students from having a say about how things are done. Table 6 on the next page displays the responses of senior high students and faculty/administrators. The percentages shown indicate the percent of all survey participants, including those making no response, who cited a given problem. The problems are listed in the order of frequency of mention by the combined student groups. A rank order is also noted for frequency of mention by the staff respondents. A number of students listed problems such as lack of supplies, that are not relevant to the immediate question of involvement in decision-making affecting students. These responses could not be counted and are included in the no response tally.

About half of all the student respondents and about half of the faculty/administrator respondents gave no response or did not know

TABLE 6

PROBLEMS STATED BY STUDENTS AND STAFF AS CREATING OBSTACLES TO STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN A SAMPLE OF D. C. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, RANKED ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY MARCH, 1973

Problems	PERCENT* OF AND RANKING BY RESPONDENTS						
	Student Body N=230 %	Student Council Members N=30 %	Student Advisory Council Officers N=53 %	Students Cumulative N=313 %	Ranking by Students	Staff: Principals Teachers, & Council Advisors N=31 %	Ranking by Staff
1. Don't Know/No Response	60	53	34	55	1	48	1
2. Teacher apathy; attitude, etc.	14	7	26	15	2	--	--
3. Student apathy; immaturity, behavior, etc.	10	13	28	14	3	19	3
4. Principal apathy; attitude, etc.	10	7	15	11	4	--	--
5. Unsympathetic administration; bureaucracy, etc.	4	20	9	7	5	--	--
6. Lack of communication/ cooperation between students and faculty-administration	4	10	8	5	6.5	13	4
7. Ineffective student council; unrepresentative	5	7	6	5	6.5	32	2
8. None	5	3	2	4	8	10	5
9. Lack of council-student body communication channels, i.e. daily bulletin, mailboxes, etc.	2	--	8	3	9	--	--
10. Favoritism; racial tension, jealousy, etc.	2	--	2	2	11	--	--
11. Lack of student assemblies, council meetings, etc.	2	3	2	2	11	3	6.5
12. Fear of reprisal	--	7	4	2	11	--	--
13. Superintendent; Board of Education apathy	1	--	2	.9	13	--	--
14. Council meetings dominated by assistant principal/council advisor	--	--	2	.6	14	3	6.5

* Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents.

of any problems hindering student involvement in decision-making affecting students. An interesting contrast occurred between the problems cited most frequently by the students and those cited most frequently by the faculty/administrator group. The students were more likely to cite the apathy and attitudes of the teachers, the students, and the principal as barriers to meaningful student involvement in decision-making. The student council members as a group were most likely to cite an unsympathetic administration as the problem. On the other hand, almost one-third of the faculty/administrator respondents most frequently cited an ineffective and unrepresentative student council as a barrier to meaningful student involvement. The faculty/administrator group cited student apathy, immaturity and behavior second most frequently, which coincides with the student analysis of the situation. However, the staff participants in the survey did not identify either teachers, principals, or the school administration in general as hindering meaningful student involvement.

*** Junior High School Results: Students and Staff ***

Of the eight junior high schools in the survey, only six had a student organization that could be called a Student Council. One of the two schools that had no student council did have a school safety committee composed primarily of ninth graders. According to verbal reports from some of the members, this group performed tasks similar to those that might fall within the jurisdiction of a council at other schools. However, the focus of the committee's activities was specific and directed to a single task. In the other junior high school that had no student council, a student-faculty advisory committee had recently been established. It was composed of appointed ninth graders and teachers. Students at these two schools were not expected to answer Part I of the Student Inyolvement Survey which asks questions about the characteristics of the student council at the respondent's school. (See Appendix I.) Part II was an opinionnaire, so students in the two junior highs that had no student council were able to respond to most of the questions. They did omit those opinion questions that were dependent upon the fact of having an operating student council.

Status of Student Councils in Junior High Schools

Table 7 on the next page lists various characteristics of student councils. The characteristics listed are abbreviated concepts taken from the questions in Part I of the Student Involvement Survey. (See Appendix I) The table shows what percent of each responding sub-group indicated that a given characteristic was common to their school ("Yes" column), what percent indicated that the characteristic was not common to their school ("No" column), and what percent either did not know or did not respond to the question ("DK/NR" column). All the percentages are based on the number of respondents in the six junior high schools that reported having a student council and the ninth graders in the school having the student-faculty advisory

TABLE 7

STATUS OF STUDENT COUNCILS
IN A SAMPLE OF D.C. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
MARCH, 1973

Student Council Characteristics	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS											
	Student Body N=269			Student Council Members N=40			Student Advisory and Council Officers N=39			Staff: Principals, Teachers, Council Advisors N=36		
	Yes	No	D.K. N.R.	Yes	No	D.K. N.R.	Yes	No	D.K. N.R.	Yes	No	D.K. N.R.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Meeting Procedures:												
Fixed Meeting Schedule	38	9	53	62	29	9	59	28	13	64	5	31
Special Meetings Called If Needed	41	8	51	63	16	21	61	26	13	72	6	22
Council Meets Once A Week	32	20	48	50	15	35	41	44	15	17	39	44
Council Meets Before/After School	49	5	46	80	2	18	72	13	15	56	16	28
Roberts' Rules of Order Used	15	7	78	35	12	53	31	26	43	31	11	58
Non-Member Students Can Attend Meetings	8	25	67	30	26	44	36	33	31	31	28	41
Teachers Attend Council Meetings	21	15	64	20	55	25	21	48	31	17	44	39
Representation:												
Each Homeroom Represented in Council	67	11	22	75	12	13	54	31	15	83	3	14
Grade Average Qualification For Members	36	23	41	25	40	35	23	48	29	3	69	28
Selection Procedures:												
All Students Vote For Council Members	70	10	20	78	12	10	80	15	5	81	5	14
School Faculty/Administrators Choose Members	18	45	37	13	56	31	28	69	3	--	78	22
All Students Vote For Council Officers	43	23	34	60	27	13	77	18	5	61	8	31
Only Council Members Vote For Council Officers	24	31	45	30	55	15	36	54	10	11	61	28
School Faculty/Administrators Choose Officers	13	39	48	13	71	16	13	56	31	--	86	14
Input and Feedback Procedures:												
Prior knowledge of Council Agenda	11	73	16	28	67	5	31	66	3	22	50	28
Can Make Suggestions For Agenda	43	25	32	70	17	13	74	13	13	67	8	25
Meeting Procedures Are Reported	41	52	7	50	29	21	64	28	8	61	19	20

D.K. = Don't Know
N.R. = No Response

committee. Again, it is important to keep in mind that the results reported here reflect the respondents' perception of what exists and not necessarily the actual situation.

The general picture of student government practices in the D. C. junior high schools is similar to that of the senior high schools. (See Table 1). Generally, each homeroom is represented in the student council and all the students vote for council members. At most of the sample junior highs the entire student body participates in the selection of council officers. Councils tend to have a fixed meeting schedule, but additional meetings are called when needed. The student councils are not as likely to meet weekly as are the councils in the senior high schools. Junior high school councils generally meet either before or after school, as do the senior high councils. Probably some councils use Roberts' Rules of Order, but on the whole respondents did not know whether these procedural rules were used in their school's council meetings or not. Non-members seem to be welcome to attend council meetings in many junior high schools, but the student body does not seem to be aware of this. Council officers, council members and staff were much more likely than members of the student body to think that they could make suggestions for council agendas. However, all groups reported overwhelmingly that they had no prior knowledge of what would be discussed at council meetings. Only 40 percent of the student body respondents reported that they received reports of the proceedings of student council meetings.

In general, the Student Advisory Council members, council officers and council members were much more definite in their responses than were members of the student body. That is, they were less likely to check "Don't know" or give no response to the questions. Like the senior high school students large numbers of junior high school students indicated that they had very little information about the student government procedures at their schools. Like the senior high students they were most likely to give knowledgeable responses about representation practices and about election procedures. They were least knowledgeable about the details of the meeting procedures. Prior knowledge of council agenda does not appear to be encouraged, while feedback reaches fewer than two-thirds of the members of the student body. Councils seem better able to communicate their activities to teachers and administrators than to other students.

Activities of the Student Councils in Junior High Schools

About half of all the junior high school survey participants indicated that they did not know or gave no response to the open-ended question: "What does your student council do?" Table 8 on the next page displays the variety of council activities cited by the other 50 percent of the survey participants. The activities are listed in the order of the frequency with which they were mentioned by the student groups combined. A frequency rank is also shown for the faculty/administrator respondents. It is interesting to note that while about 50 percent of the members of the student body and

TABLE 8

ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY STUDENT COUNCILS
IN A SAMPLE OF D.C. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS,
RANKED ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY

MARCH, 1973

Student Council Activities	PERCENT* OF AND RANKING BY RESPONDENTS						
	Student Body N=200 %	Student Council Members N=40 %	Student Advisory Council Officers N=39 %	Students Cumulative N=279 %	Ranking by Students	Staff: Principals Teachers, & Council Advisors N=36 %	Ranking by Staff
1. Don't Know/No Response	57	20	18	46	1	56	1
2. Sponsor social and recreational activities, i.e. plays, dances, festivals, trips, etc.	29	23	31	28	2	19	3
3. Plan ways for overall improvement of school, i.e. menus, facilities, beautification, etc.	17	33	36	22	3	14	4
4. Solicit students' opinion; inform them of their rights, responsibilities, etc.	13	48	28	20	4	22	2
5. Plan school fund raising activities, i.e. bake sales, etc.	9	15	31	13	5	--	--
6. Nothing	5	5	18	7	6	--	--
7. Assist faculty, i.e. as monitors, ushers, etc.	3	13	8	5	7	8	7.5
8. Give to charity; baskets to needy, etc.	1	3	10	3	8	3	11
9. Promote good student-student, student-faculty relationships	1	3	5	2	10	11	5
10. Plan extra-curricular activities	2	--	3	2	10	8	7.5
11. Sponsor assembly programs; speakers, awards, etc.	1	--	8	2	10	8	7.5
12. Serve as link between students and administration	2	3	--	1	13	--	--
13. Sponsor homecoming activities	1	3	3	1	13	--	--
14. Plan yearbook	1	3	--	1	13	--	--
15. Sponsor Chirstmas school post office	1	--	--	.4	16	3	11
16. Attend meetings downtown	--	--	3	.4	16	--	--
17. Sponsor cheerleaders	1	--	--	.4	16	--	--
18. Provide orientation for new students; help students with adjustment problems	--	--	--	--	--	8	7.5
19. Sponsor school newspaper	--	--	--	--	--	3	11

* Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents.

of the staff failed to cite a council activity, council officers and members had only about a 20 percent no response rate.

The three activities cited most frequently by the combined student groups and the staff, while not in the same order of frequency, are the same in substance: sponsor social and recreational activities, plan for the overall improvement of conditions at the school, solicit students' opinions and inform the students of their rights and responsibilities. The activity cited most frequently by student respondents, namely sponsoring social activities, and that cited most frequently by faculty/administrator group, namely soliciting student opinion, were exactly the same activities cited most frequently by the senior high student respondents and the senior high staff respondents, respectively.

Opinions About Student Government in Junior High Schools

Part II of the Student Involvement Questionnaire asked students and staff to indicate their opinions about student government in their school. (See Appendix I) Table 9 on the next page displays the junior high responses by percent of each sub-group that made "Affirmative" responses and the percent that made "Negative" responses to the survey questions. In the table, the columns labled "Affirmative" combine the responses of persons who checked "Definitely Yes" and "I tend to think so" on the survey form. The columns labeled "Negative" combine the responses of persons who checked "Definitely No" and "I tend to think not." The percentages that appear in Table 9 are percents of the total number of persons in the given sub-group who could have been expected to respond to the given question. Students at the schools that had no council omitted some opinion questions such as: "Do you get enough information about your student council?"

As in the senior high schools, the junior high school survey participants thought overwhelmingly that having a student council was important, despite the general lack of information about council operations and activities in their schools (see Table 7). Generally, they thought their councils dealt with important issues. Two-thirds or more of the survey participants thought the selection procedures for council members and council officers were good. Council members felt strongly that they should receive a grade and/or credit for being on the council, while the faculty/administrators felt even more strongly that they should not. The respondents were divided on whether members should have grade average qualifications, but large percentages of each responding group tended to be against such qualifications. Two-thirds or more of the respondents reported that they were interested in council activities and more than half of each group thought other students were interested as well. When asked whether they were satisfied with their student council about half of each responding group gave an affirmative response. A sizeable percentage of each group, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the current council. The exact source of this discontent is not apparent from this survey, but the results do show that three-fourths

TABLE 9

OPINIONS ABOUT STUDENT GOVERNMENT
IN A SAMPLE OF D.C. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
MARCH, 1973

Statements About Student Government	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS							
	Student Body N=269		Student Council Members N=40		Student Advisory and Council Officers N=39		Staff: Principals, Teachers, Council Advisors N=36	
	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
General Opinion:								
Student Council Is Important	83	8	95	5	95	3	89	--
Our Student Council Deals With Important Issues	65	28	78	21	69	31	75	11
I Am Satisfied With Our Student Council	59	29	53	38	51	46	44	34
Receptivity to Council:								
Faculty/Administrators Take Council Decisions Seriously	54	40	70	31	41	54	61	25
I Am Interested In Council Activities	67	24	83	13	95	3	89	3
Other Students Are Interested In Council Activities	52	34	56	35	59	36	63	28
Meeting Procedures: Student Council:								
Meets Frequently Enough	48	34	58	33	54	39	53	28
Should Meet During School Hours	29	55	41	50	36	52	59	39
Should Meet Before/After School	56	18	56	23	66	20	55	25
Should Be Open To All Students	63	25	53	38	59	30	70	27
Should Be Attended By Faculty/ Administrators	74	11	60	18	79	10	58	34
Council Representatives:								
Should Have Grade Average Qualifications	56	37	48	52	49	39	36	59
Should Receive Grades	39	50	60	35	41	46	11	86
Should Receive Course Credit	49	38	71	28	46	41	14	86
Selection Procedures:								
Council Member Selection Method Is Good	69	24	86	11	79	18	81	3
Council Officer Selection Method Is Good	70	23	86	13	75	24	75	6
Input and Feedback Procedures:								
Information On Council Activities Is Adequate	20	76	50	48	51	41	36	53
Students At Our School Are Involved In Decision-making	52	34	65	30	64	36	70	28
Teachers Want Students Involved In Decisions	61	32	73	18	64	33	75	11
Principals Want Students Involved In Decisions	58	34	68	28	66	33	81	14
Superintendent Wants Students Involved In Decisions	61	25	73	23	75	23	83	11
Board of Education Wants Students Involved In Decisions	66	23	73	20	85	16	84	11

NOTE: AFFIRMATIVE AND NEGATIVE RESPONSES DO NOT ADD TO 100% IN EACH CASE DUE TO NO RESPONSES ON SOME FORMS.

of the student body respondents thought their information on council activities was inadequate.

Asked whether they thought faculty and administrators took their student council decisions seriously, junior high student respondents expressed mixed opinions. Almost three-fourths of the student council members and about half of the student body thought the adults took council decisions seriously, while fewer than half the council officers thought so. On the question of whether students are involved in decision-making, the student council officers were not as pessimistic: almost two-thirds of the council officers and members indicated that students were involved while about half of the student body agreed. On both of these issues, the junior high faculty/administrator respondents had high affirmative responses, expressing the opinion that council decisions were taken seriously and that students were involved in decision-making. About one-third of all the student respondents thought teachers, principals, superintendent, and Board of Education did not want them involved in decision-making. However, the percentages of students who thought adults wanted their involvement were generally higher than the comparable percentages of senior high respondents. A larger percent of junior high faculty/administrators than of senior high faculty/administrators thought adults in the educational community wanted student input, as well. It is interesting to note that of the student body and advisory council groups, a higher percent thought the Board of Education wanted student input into decision-making more than they thought teachers and principals did. Student council members felt that teachers, the superintendent and the Board of Education wanted student participation in decision-making.

In answer to each question in Part II of the Student Involvement Survey, participants could have checked "Don't Care" or they might have made no response. Only about 10 percent of each group of respondents chose these alternatives. The average "Don't Care" and "No Response" tallies for each question that appears in Table 9 is distributed among the respondent groups as follows:

	Don't Care	No Response
Student Body	6%	5%
Council Members	5%	3%
Council Officers and Student Advisory Council Members	4%	3%
Principals, Teachers and Student Council Faculty Advisor	--	10%

Opinions About Student Involvement in Junior High Schools

Table 10 on the next page shows how strongly the junior high respondents thought they should be involved in decision-making in the areas listed. The table shows the percent of the survey participants who checked an "Affirmative" response, either "Definitely Yes" or "I tend to think so." It also shows the percent who gave a "Negative" response, either "Definitely No" or "I tend to think not."

More than 50 percent of all the junior high students participating in the survey favored student involvement in each of the areas listed on the Student Involvement Survey, except "Design of school buildings." The junior high staff had greater than 50 percent affirmative responses on all but nine of the 21 items listed. The areas in which both students and staff favored student input with the greatest frequency were: student rights, student responsibilities, extra-curricular activities, safety and security, and dress code. The faculty/administrators selected eight areas such as extra-curricular activities, student discipline, student rights, and student responsibilities with more frequency than students. The eight areas that received 50 percent or more negative response from the junior high staff included: the rating of principals, design of school buildings, the selection of teachers and principals, teaching methods, class scheduling, textbook selection, and superintendent's activities. This suggests that the junior high staff considered certain areas of decision-making as being reserved to themselves and certain areas as legitimate for student involvement.

A comparison of the junior high responses with the senior high responses on the question of student involvement (see Table 4) reveals some interesting points. On almost every item a lower percent of the junior high respondents favored student involvement. One exception was in the area of athletic rules where more junior high respondents than senior high respondents indicated they wanted stucent involvement. This finding suggests that junior high students were less anxious than senior high students to become involved in decisions affecting students. The pattern of responses of the junior high faculty/administrators was quite different from that of the senior high faculty/administrators. The senior high staff favored student involvement in all the areas except principal selection and teacher selection, while junior high staff was against student involvement in eight of the 21 areas listed. These differences in opinion between the junior high staff members and the senior high staff members seem to reflect the age differences of the students with whom they work. These findings are even more interesting,

TABLE 10

OPINIONS ABOUT STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
IN DECISION-MAKING IN AREAS AFFECTING STUDENTS
IN A SAMPLE OF D.C. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
MARCH, 1973

Areas Affecting Students	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS							
	Student Body N=269		Student Council Members N=40		Student Advisory and Council Officers N=39		Staff: Principals, Teachers, Council Advisors N=36	
	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %	Affirmative %	Negative %
a. Textbook selection	67	21	56	25	62	25	47	50
b. Subjects offered	76	15	78	18	82	8	81	16
c. Extra-curricular activities	77	10	85	8	90	--	100	--
d. Student discipline	70	16	66	28	82	6	94	6
e. Student grades	68	23	63	31	67	23	66	30
f. Rating of teachers	69	21	53	36	80	13	50	47
g. Rating of principals	63	25	50	40	72	21	42	52
h. Rating of courses	77	12	68	23	88	5	67	28
i. School safety and security	83	8	76	10	92	6	84	11
j. Dress code	74	18	86	11	88	10	91	3
k. Teaching methods	66	28	61	28	82	16	36	56
l. Design of school buildings	44	44	51	41	51	41	44	53
m. Class scheduling	68	25	78	10	85	15	25	61
n. Student rights	89	6	90	6	95	5	97	3
o. Student responsibilities	86	7	86	6	95	3	100	--
p. Athletic rules	66	21	76	21	77	18	78	14
q. Cheerleader selection	63	21	70	23	75	15	84	11
r. Principal selection	51	36	53	35	52	42	9	84
s. Teacher selection	53	37	55	33	52	38	11	86
t. School board activities	63	22	78	10	82	13	44	44
u. Superintendent's activities	53	30	66	31	69	23	28	64
v. Other	--	--	--	--	31	--	--	--

NOTE: AFFIRMATIVE AND NEGATIVE RESPONSES DO NOT ADD TO 100% IN EACH CASE DUE TO NO RESPONSES ON SOME FORMS.

however, when they are considered in light of the data displayed in Tables 3 and 8. Those tables revealed that junior high students were more likely than senior high students to think that the adults wanted them to have a say in how things are done at their schools.

As in the previous part of the questionnaire, the percent of the survey participants who checked "Don't Care" or who gave no response was quite low. The average percent of the participants who chose these alternatives for each of the items in Table 10 was distributed as follows:

	Don't Care	No Response
Student Body	5%	6%
Council Members	4%	6%
Council Officers and Student Advisory Members	4%	4%
Staff: Principals, teachers, and Student Council Advisor	--	5%

Areas Cited as Most Important for Student Involvement in Junior High Schools

Survey participants were asked to list the three areas of student involvement that were most important to them from the list provided in the Student Involvement Survey. Table 11 lists the areas for student involvement ranked according to the frequency with which students and staff identified them as important areas for student involvement. Only 8 percent of the student participants, and 31 percent of the faculty participants gave no response to this question.

The three areas of importance to the largest percent of the students were: student rights, dress code, and school safety and security. Ranked highest in importance by the junior high faculty/administrators were: student responsibilities, student rights, and student discipline. The rank order correlation was computed to determine whether there is a significant relationship between students' and staffs' opinions regarding student involvement; (i.e. what students considered important is given relatively the same importance by staff.) The correlation between the students' ranking and the staff's ranking was significant at the .01 level of confidence. This finding suggests that planning for student involvement in decision-making will be easier because students want to become involved in areas where staff members think it is important for them to be involved. One interesting difference does occur, however, in the area of student discipline. Students ranked this area 14th in importance while faculty/administrators ranked this area third in importance. It is apparent that staff members are more anxious to have students involved in decisions concerning student discipline than are the students. It is interesting to note that the areas considered most important for student involvement by the junior high students coincides

TABLE 11

AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT
TO STUDENTS IN A SAMPLE OF D. C. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS,
RANKED ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY BY STUDENT GROUPS AND BY STAFF
MARCH, 1973

Areas for Student Involvement	Students: All Student Groups N = 348			Staff: Principals, Teachers, and Council Advisors N = 36		
	Rank	No. of Responses	% Of Respondents*	Rank	No. Of Responses	% Of Respondents*
Student Rights	1	180	52	2	10	28
Dress Code	2	127	36	6.5	3	8
School Safety and Security	3	87	25	4	6	17
Student Responsibilities	4	64	18	1	18	50
Class Scheduling	5	54	16	9.5	2	6
Teaching Methods	6	44	13	9.5	2	6
Subjects Offered	7	41	12	6.5	3	8
Athletic Rules	8	36	10	--	--	--
Principal Selection	9	32	9	--	--	--
Teacher Selection	10	31	9	--	--	--
Student Grades	11	29	8	13	1	3
School Board Activities	12	26	7	--	--	--
Extra-curricular Activities	13	24	7	5	4	11
Student Discipline	14	23	7	3	7	19
Textbook Selection	15.5	21	6	9.5	2	6
Rating of Teachers	15.5	21	6	9.5	2	6
Cheerleader Selection	17	14	4	--	--	--
Design of School Buildings	18	13	4	--	--	--
Rating of Principals	19	11	3	13	1	3
Rating of Courses	20.5	9	3	13	1	3
Other	20.5	9	3	--	--	--
Superintendent's Activities	22	8	2	--	--	--

* Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses of respondents.

Note: Of the student and staff respondents 8 and 31 percent respectively did not list any areas as being important for student involvement.

with the three areas considered most important by the senior high students. Likewise the areas ranked of first and second importance to the junior high staff were the same as those ranked highest by the senior high staff respondents.

According to the laws of probability, the chance of an item being selected when a respondent has three choices from a list of twenty items is about 15 percent. The junior high student respondents mentioned five areas with greater frequency than might have been expected by chance. The first-ranked area of concern, student rights, was included on the list of the three most important areas by 52 percent of the students, or by more than three times the number of students who might have included that item by chance. Dress code, the item ranked second, was listed by 36 percent of the students, or more than twice the number who would have mentioned this item by chance. The junior high faculty/administrators mentioned four areas more frequently than might have been expected by chance. Student responsibilities was mentioned by 50 percent of the staff, or three times more frequently than by chance, while student rights, mentioned by 28 percent of the staff, occurred on the list of important areas almost twice as frequently as might have been expected by chance. The junior high students and staff mentioned five and four areas, respectively, more frequently than might have been expected by chance. Senior high students and staff participants mentioned seven areas as being important more frequently than might have been expected by chance. This suggests that there were fewer areas of decision-making that were considered important for students to become involved in on the junior high level than were deemed important for students to be involved in on the senior high level. This finding is in keeping with the findings in Table 4 and 10, which showed that a greater percent of the senior high survey participants were interested in having students involved in each of the items listed than were junior high survey participants.

Even though there is agreement between the junior high students and the junior high faculty/administrators on the areas that are important for student involvement, it is important to interpret these cautiously. None of the areas for student involvement listed on the Student Involvement Survey were defined for either the students or the staff. Each individual who completed the survey form responded to his individual conceptualization of the issue.

Problems Hindering Student Involvement in Junior High Schools

The final question in the Student Involvement Survey was an open-ended one that asked respondents to list the problems at their school that keep students from having a say in how things are done at their school. Table 12 on the next page displays the responses listed in order of frequency mentioned by the students. A frequency rank is also recorded for the staff respondents. As with the senior high school survey participants, a number of junior high school respondents cited general problems such as a lack of supplies. Again these responses have been counted in the "No response" group.

TABLE 12

PROBLEMS STATED BY STUDENTS AND STAFF AS CREATING OBSTACLES TO STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN A SAMPLE OF D. C. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, RANKED ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY MARCH, 1973

Problems	PERCENT* OF AND RANKING BY RESPONDENTS						
	Student Body N=269 %	Student Council Members N=40 %	Student Advisory Council Officers N=39 %	Students Cumulative N=348 %	Ranking by Students	Staff: Principals Teachers, & Council Advisors N=36 %	Ranking by Staff
1. Don't Know/No Response	78	65	59	74	1	67	1
2. Teacher apathy; attitude, etc.	10	23	26	13	2	8	3
3. Principal apathy; attitude, etc.	7	3	15	7	3	6	5
4. Student apathy; immaturity, behavior, etc.	4	15	15	6	4	28	2
5. Lack of communication/ cooperation between students and faculty-administration	4	3	8	4	5	--	--
6. Lack of council-student communication channels, i.e. daily bulletin, mailboxes, etc.	3	--	--	2	6	--	--
7. Superintendent; Board of Education	1	--	--	1	7	--	--
8. Ineffective student council; unrepresentative	.7	--	3	.9	8.5	6	5
9. Favoritism, racial tension, jealousy, etc.	.7	--	3	.9	8.5	--	--
10. Poor counseling service	.7	--	--	.6	10.5	--	--
11. Fear of reprisal	.7	--	--	.6	10.5	--	--
12. None	.4	--	--	.3	12.5	6	5
13. Lack of student assemblies, council meetings, etc.	.4	--	--	.3	12.5	--	--
14. No student council	--	--	--	--	--	3	8
15. Large enrollment	--	--	--	--	--	3	8
16. Lack of extra teacher-time to work with students	--	--	--	--	--	3	8

* Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses by respondents.

About three-fourths of all the student survey participants and two-thirds of all the staff survey participants either answered "Don't Know" or gave no response to this question. This suggests that junior high students were indeed involved in decision-making to as great an extent as they desired. At least, there were few barriers that kept them from being involved. On the other hand, it could mean that the survey participants were unable or unwilling to isolate and identify whatever problems they felt. Yet a third possibility could be that the low response is an indication of apathy.

Of the problems cited by student respondents, three recurred the most frequently and were cited by more than 5 percent of the survey participants: teacher apathy and attitude, principal apathy and attitude, and student apathy and immaturity. The senior high school student respondents cited the same three problem areas most frequently. The staff members, on the other hand, were most likely to cite student apathy and immaturity as a barrier to student involvement in decision-making. Surprisingly enough, more than 5 percent of the junior high school staff survey participants noted that teacher and principal apathy and attitudes were barriers to student involvement, contrary to the senior high school staff respondents who failed to mention these areas among their list of problems. Junior high school staff members did cite ineffective student councils and a lack of student council meetings as a problem, but not as frequently as did the senior high school staff members, who saw this as the biggest problem on the senior high school level.

V. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

1. All sample senior high schools and six of the eight sample junior high schools have student council organizations.
2. An overwhelming percentage of the senior and junior high school students think that it is important to have a student council.
3. In both the senior high schools and the junior high schools, student councils generally consist of homeroom representatives elected by their peers and officers elected by the entire student body.
4. Senior high school student councils for the most part meet weekly while junior high school student councils tend to meet less frequently.
5. Sponsoring social and recreational activities is currently the most common activity of both senior and junior high school student councils, according to responding students.
6. About half the senior and junior high school student respondents indicated that they have little knowledge about the organization, structure, and activities of their student councils.
7. About three-fourths of the senior high and junior high school respondents think that their information about their student council is inadequate.
8. About half the senior high and junior high school student and staff respondents reported that they are dissatisfied with their student councils.
9. Although half of the students have little information about their councils, a majority of the senior high and junior high school students and staff think their student councils deal with important issues.
10. More than half of the senior high school student council officers and members and of the junior high school council officers thought adults in the educational community did not take seriously their student council decisions.
11. Staff respondents of the senior high and junior high sample schools (almost two-thirds) thought adults in the school community took seriously student council decisions.
12. About half the senior and junior high school student respondents think students at their schools are involved in decision-making affecting students.
13. About half of the senior high and junior high school student respondents and about two-thirds of the senior high and junior high school staff respondents think adults in the educational community want student involvement in decisions affecting students.

14. The areas identified as important for student involvement in decision-making were similar for senior high school students and junior high school students. The following lists rank the areas in order of frequency of mention by students:

Senior High School	Junior High School
a. Student rights	a. Student rights
b. School safety and security	b. Dress code
c. Dress code	c. School safety and security
d. Teaching methods	d. Student responsibilities
e. Student responsibilities	e. Class scheduling
f. Subjects offered	f. Teaching methods
g. Class scheduling	g. Subjects offered

15. The areas identified as important for student involvement in decision-making were similar for staff respondents in both senior high and junior high schools. The following lists rank the areas in order of frequency of mention by staff:

Senior High School	Junior High School
a. Student responsibilities	a. Student responsibilities
b. Student rights	b. Student rights
c. School safety and security	c. Student discipline
d. Student discipline	d. School safety and security
e. Teaching methods	e. Extracurricular activities
f. Subjects offered	f. Dress code
g. Extra-curricular activities	g. Subjects offered

16. There is a significant correlation between the rankings assigned to areas for student involvement in decision-making by senior high school students and staff survey participants. Likewise, there is a significant correlation between the rankings assigned to areas for student involvement in decision-making by junior high school students and staff survey participants.

17. Fewer than half of the senior high and junior high school student respondents actually stated problems that they thought kept them from having a say in decisions affecting students at their schools. Of those problems cited by students, the most frequently mentioned were:

Senior High School	Junior High School
a. Teacher apathy and attitude	a. Teacher apathy and attitude
b. Student apathy and immaturity	b. Principal apathy and attitude
c. Principal apathy and attitude	c. Student apathy and immaturity

18. Almost half of the staff respondents in the senior high schools and two thirds of the staff participants in the junior high schools cited no problems that they thought kept students from having a say in decisions affecting students at their schools. Of those problems stated by staff, the most frequently cited were:

Senior High School	Junior High School
a. Ineffective student council	a. Student apathy and immaturity
b. Student apathy and immaturity	b. Teacher apathy and attitude
c. Lack of communication/cooperation between students and faculty/ administration	

19. Fewer than 7 percent of all the student participants indicated they did not care about student government and student involvement. No staff participants indicated they did not care.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

1. There is very little difference between the survey responses of the senior high school participants and the junior high school participants.

   The organizational structures and procedures of senior high school student councils and junior high school student councils are very similar. Similar too, are the opinions of the senior and junior high school students about student government and student involvement in decision-making. Senior high school staff respondents and junior high school staff respondents expressed remarkably similar opinions about student government and student involvement.

2. Effective communication between student councils and their constituency, the student body, is lacking.

   Student councils are, on the whole, most visible to those persons who participate in them, i.e. council members and officers. The general lack of information about council organization and activities among both senior and junior high school student bodies coupled with the widespread interest expressed by the students in their council's activities, suggests that improved procedures for input and feedback need to be developed between the councils and the general student body.

3. Insufficient communication has lead to a lack of understanding between students and staff regarding meaningful student involvement in decision-making.

   The adults surveyed indicated greater support for student government and student involvement in decision-making than the students recognized. Staff members reported that they took student council decisions seriously and that they wanted student input in decisions affecting students. Students, on the other hand, were inclined to think the staff did not take council decisions seriously and only half thought the adults in the educational community wanted their input in decision-making. In relation to the identification of decision-making areas in which students should become involved, the distance between adults and students may not be as great as is often perceived. The adults were basically in agreement with the students in naming areas of importance. These findings emphasize the need for more opportunities for adults in the educational community to exchange opinions with the students they serve.

4. There is substantial overlap of the areas identified as important for student involvement in decision-making by the senior high school students and staff and by the junior high school students and staff.

   Senior high school students, and to a slightly lesser extent, junior high school students indicated an interest in seeing student involvement in all areas of school life. Senior high staff, and, to a lesser extent, junior high school staff thought students should be involved in most of the areas affecting student life. Student rights, school safety and security, and student responsibilities are identified by both students and staff as areas of greatest importance for student involvement in decision-making. Dress code is of great concern to the students but not to the staff, while student discipline is of great concern to the staff but not to the students. Most of the activities which have not traditionally involved students such as teacher and principal selection, superintendent and Board of Education activities, and even staff evaluation, is of much less immediate importance to both students and staff in terms of student involvement.

5. Although students and staff think that student councils are important and that their councils deal with important issues, there is widespread dissatisfaction with present student councils.

   The survey results suggest that councils are attending primarily to the traditional council activities of sponsoring school social and recreational activities without involving themselves in areas in which students think they should have a voice, such as student rights and school safety and security. The disparity between the existing council activities and the specific areas of student concern may account for the dissatisfaction.

6. The findings of the Student Involvement Survey affirm that students and staff in the secondary schools are deeply interested in having students participate in decision-making in areas affecting students.

   Survey participants expressed a great desire for student involvement in almost all areas affecting student life. Large percentages of participants cited obstacles to student involvement in decision-making. Yet only about half the survey participants thought students at their schools were involved in decision-making. And apathy--either on the part of students, teachers, or administrators--was the most frequently perceived problem hindering student involvement. However, the survey results reveal that a potential reservoir of concerned persons exists and that only effective mechanisms for involvement are lacking.

APPENDIX I

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY FORM

Departments of Research and Evaluation

CITY-WIDE STUDENT SURVEY FORM

Name of School _____ Grade_____ Date _____

Male _____ Female _____

The Departments of Research and Evaluation with the cooperation of the Student Advisory Council want to know what you think about your student council. Your opinion about the role of students in making decisions that affect the students is also needed.

PART I

Answer the following by placing a check in the column of your choice for each question. (In this questionnaire student council and student government mean the same thing.)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Do you have a student council (student government) organization in your school?			
a. Are you a member of the student council?			
b. Are you an officer in the student council?			
2. Is there a schedule for your student council meetings?			
3. Can students who are not student council members go to council meetings?			
4. Does your student council meet during regular school hours?			
5. Does your student council meet either before or after school?			
6. Are parlimentary procedures (Roberts' Rules of Order) used in the student council meetings?			
7. Does each homeroom (section) have a representative in the student council?			
8. Does the teacher, principal, or other school staff member choose the student council member?			
9. Do students vote for student council members?			
10. If you are not voted in or chosen can you become a student council member?			
11. Must students have good grades to become members of the student council.			

	Yes	No	Don't Know
12. Does the teacher, principal or other staff member choose the student council officers?			
13. Do all students vote for the student council officers?			
14. Do only student council members vote for student council officers?			
15. Do teachers (other than the council adviser) go to the council meetings?			
16. Are you told about what happens at student council meetings?			
17. Do you know ahead of time what will be discussed at the student council meetings?			
18. Can you make suggestions about what will be discussed at the student council meetings?			
19. Does your student council call special or additional meetings?			

20. How often is your student council scheduled to meet? (check one)

- ☐ Once a week?
- ☐ Two times a month?
- ☐ Once a month?
- ☐ Other (tell when) _____

21. What does your student council do? (For example: what kinds of activities, school matters, issues, concerns)

PART II

Give YOUR OPINION on the following questions by placing a check in the column which indicates your feeling about each question.

	Definitely Yes	I tend to think so	I tend to think not	Definitely No	Don't Care
1. Should teachers and principals go to student council meetings?					
2. Do you think that you get enough information about student council activities?					
3. Do you think it is important to have a student council?					
4. Does your student council deal with matters you think are important?					
5. Do you think that student council decisions are taken seriously by your teachers, principal, and other staff members?					
6. Do you think that your student council members are selected in a good way?					
7. Do you think that your student council officers are selected in a good way?					
8. Should students have to have good grades to become a member of the student council?					
9. Are you interested in your student council activities?					
10. Do you think other students are interested in your student council activities?					
11. Are you satisfied with your student council?					
12. Do you think students in your school have a say about how things are done in your school?					
13. Should students get grades for being a student council member?					

	Definitely Yes	I tend to think so	I tend to think not	Definitely No	Don't Care
14. Should students get course credit for being a student council member?					
15. Do you think your student council meets often enough?					
16. Do you think your student council meetings should be open to all students?					
17. Should your student council meet during regular school hours?					
18. Should your student council meet either before or after school?					
19. Do you think that your teachers want you to have a say about how things are done in your school that affect students?					
20. Do you think that your principals and assistant principals want you to have a say about how things are done in your school that affect students?					
21. Do you think that your superintendent and his staff want you to have a say about how things are done that affect students?					
22. Do you think that your Board of Education wants you to have a say about how things are done that affect students?					
23. Do you think that students should have a say about the following:					
a. textbook selection					
b. subjects offered					
c. extra-curricular activities					
d. student discipline					
e. student grades					
f. rating of teachers					
g. rating of principals					
h. rating of courses					

23. (Continued) Do you think that students should have a say about the following:	Definitely Yes	I tend to think so	I tend to think not	Definitely No	Don't Care
i. school safety and security					
j. dress code					
k. teaching methods					
l. design of school buildings					
m. class scheduling					
n. student rights					
o. student responsibilities					
p. athletic rules					
q. cheerleader selection					
r. principal selection					
s. teacher selection					
t. school board activities					
u. superintendent's activities					
v. others (specify)					
_____					
_____					

24. From the list in number 23, write the three which are most important to you.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

25. List the problems (if any) at your school that you think keep students from having a say in how things are done at your school. (Write on back if more space is needed.)